

00612

c. 1962/05/06

~~TOP SECRET~~
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
THE DIRECTOR OF INTELLIGENCE AND RESEARCH

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

Subject: Meeting with the President, Sunday, 6 May 1962.

I was called at 1:00 P.M. from the White House and by Governor Harriman at a resort hotel on the Chesapeake where Eleanor and I had gone for the week end to attend a meeting with the President on Laos on Sunday afternoon at 4:30 P.M.

Prior to the meeting I met briefly with the Secretary and Governor Harriman although there was no substantive discussion of any importance. We arrived at the White House 15 minutes before the President, who came in by helicopter from Glenora.

Present at the meeting were:

Secretary Rusk, Mr. George Ball, Governor Harriman, Mr. Mike Forrestal, Mr. Carl Kaysen, Mr. McNamara, General Lemnitzer, Mr. John McCone, and me.

The discussion opened with the President saying that the situation looked somewhat less serious than it had Saturday since the Communists were not moving ahead to exploit their advantages.

The first half of the discussion dealt with the immediate situation, the moves the military were taking and the various diplomatic moves that were in process. The question of General Harkens appointment as MAAG Command Thailand came up. Since neither the Secretary nor Governor Harriman spoke to this point, I remained silent.

The discussion then moved into the question of what we would do in the future should the Communists opt for a military solution. John McCone recited CIA's estimate of how long it would take the Pathet Lao and the Viet Minh to capture Luang Prabang, Vientiane, Savanahkhet and so on. Generally the estimates ranged from two weeks down to two days in the case of Savanahkhet.

I mentioned that we would be watching the airlift very closely, to see whether any further buildup took place.

General Lemnitzer, standing before the Laos map, described their plans to take Southern Laos up to the 17th parallel. I also stood up to the map and presented the case for the occupation of territory already held by the RLG, arguing that to take Chephon would mean intervention by the Chinese Communists and the Viet Minh and that if we held only the territory

now held

✓ T ~~TOP SECRET~~

DECLASSIFIED	
Dept. of State (NLK-70-89)	
By <u>WMA/mj</u>	NARS, Date <u>1/23/81</u>

~~TOP SECRET~~ RET

-2-

now held by the RLG -- in other words, enforcing the cease-fire -- that we could still manage the problem presented by the infiltration routes through Chephon. (I have no doubt that Lemnitzer did not appreciate a rival strategic analysis.)

In a discussion of the capabilities of the FAR I was also presumptuous enough to say that I thought the FAR could at least cope, after training and reorganization and better leadership, with the problem of guerrilla warfare in the interstices between Thai and U. S. occupying forces (this also annoyed, in all probability, Mr. McNamara who said that he thought we should not make judgments on FAR capabilities here in Washington but should query the field).

The decisions taken were largely those concerning the form of the announcement by the Thais on the landing of U. S. troops and other such bow-tying exercises.

Roger Hilsman

~~TOP SECRET~~ T